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The President's Daily Brief

13 November 1972

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~~*Top Secret*~~ 25X1

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

13 November 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

A pro-government Saigon newspaper reports that President Thieu asserts the Communists have over 300,000 troops in the South, and that all of these must be withdrawn. The Communists, meanwhile, have begun hitting the "Thieu-must-go" theme again, which they had been avoiding over the past several weeks. *(Page 1)* 25X1

A South Vietnamese operation launched north and west of Quang Tri City on Saturday has encountered increased resistance. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] *(Page 2)*

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[redacted] *(Page 3)*

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In Laos, government irregulars reoccupied Dong Hene in the central panhandle on Saturday, capping a ten-day counteroffensive that began with the recapture of nearby Keng Kok. *(Page 4)*

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VIETNAM

Saigon's pro-government newspaper, Tin Song, has published a commentary on General Haig's visit. Quoting a "highly placed source," Tin Song stated that President Thieu, in his talks with General Haig and Ambassador Bunker, maintained that the Communists have over 300,000 troops in the South, not 140,000 as the US claims, and that all of these must be withdrawn. The newspaper quoted the source as saying that Thieu would not be satisfied with "any temporary withdrawal of a symbolic number of 14,000 North Vietnamese troops," and that any "tacit agreements" were invalid. The commentary maintained that all future agreements on South Vietnam "must be decided by the South Vietnamese people themselves," that the "right of self-determination" for the country's entire population must be respected, and that "no future peace agreement can be signed on their behalf."

* * *

The Vietnamese Communists have begun hitting the "Thieu-must-go" theme again, which they had been avoiding over the past several weeks. The Hanoi party daily on 10 November called Thieu an "obstacle to be removed." The same point was made again yesterday. Also, Madame Binh stated at the Paris talks on Thursday that he "should resign." Under pressure from newsmen, however, PRG spokesman Ly Van Sau acknowledged that the PRG was still willing to talk with a Saigon government headed by Thieu after the truce is signed.

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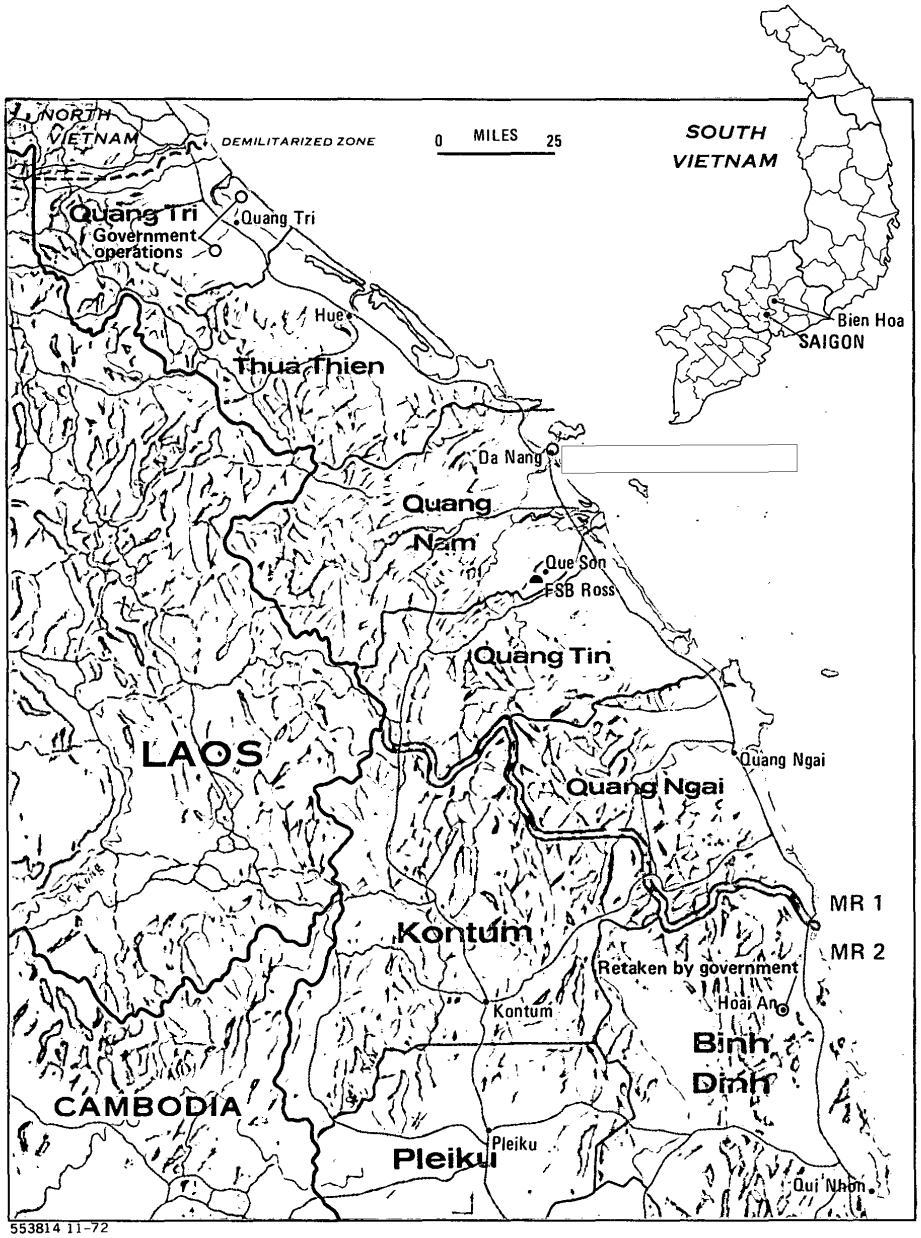

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SOUTH VIETNAM

A South Vietnamese operation launched north and west of Quang Tri City on Saturday has encountered increased resistance. Intercepts show that elements of one North Vietnamese division north of the city have been ordered to positions blocking the South Vietnamese, and that elements of another division have been alerted for possible relocation to the Quang Tri City area.

Although these divisions bore the brunt of the enemy's defense of the city before it was recaptured by the government last August, they apparently are now sufficiently recovered to return to combat.

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[redacted]

In the Que Son Valley, a regiment of the North Vietnamese 711th Division has been detected close to Fire Support Base Ross. Intercepts and prisoners indicate that the Communists will soon mount new attacks in the Que Son area, possibly with armor and artillery support. South Vietnamese forces in coastal Binh Dinh Province, meanwhile, have retaken Hoai An District capital, the last district center that was under enemy control in the province.

In the southern provinces, the Communists directed a 51-round rocket barrage in two separate attacks against Bien Hoa Airbase yesterday, causing only light damage and a few casualties. A North Vietnamese regiment that had been heavily engaged in the fighting north of Saigon appears to have pulled back for rest and refitting. Another Communist regiment in the same area is reported to have lost nearly two thirds of its personnel during the past few weeks, including the regimental commander. [redacted]

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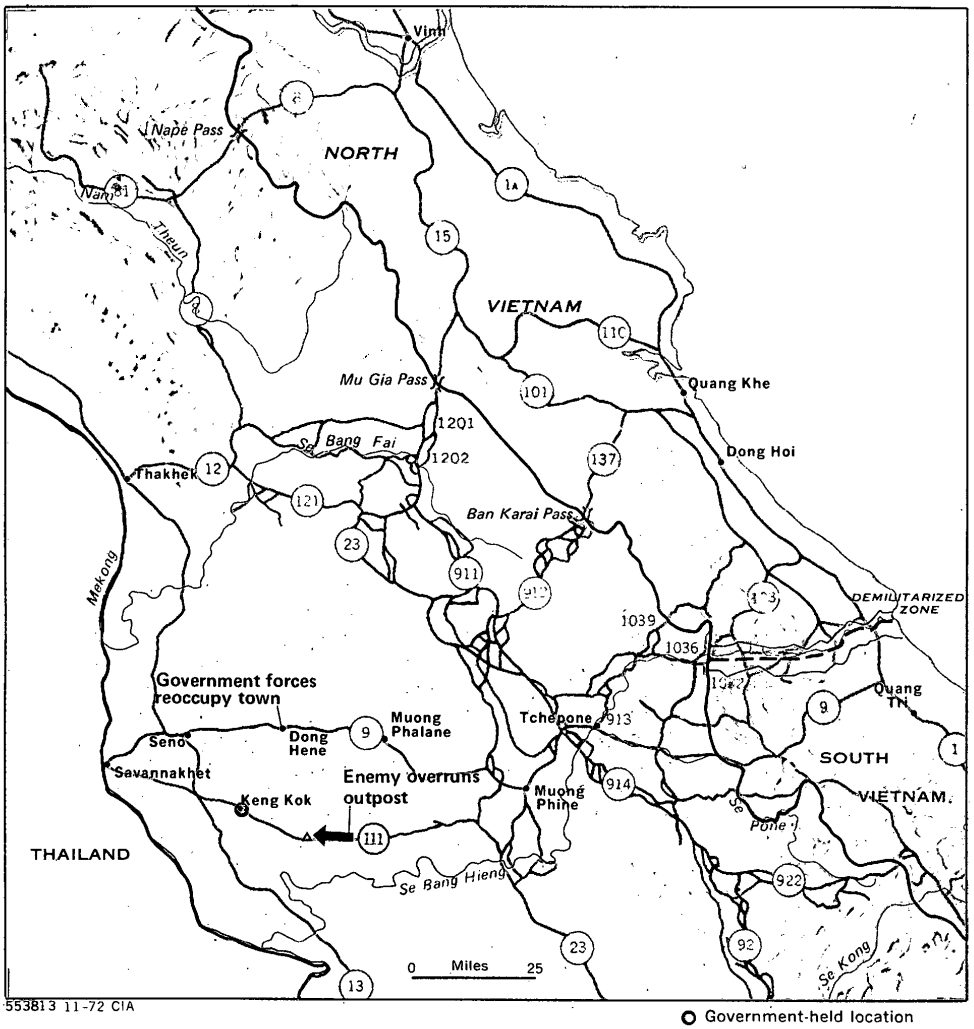
LAOS: Central Panhandle



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NOTE

Laos: Government irregulars reoccupied Dong Hene in the central panhandle on Saturday after several days of bitter fighting, capping a ten-day counteroffensive that began with the recapture of nearby Keng Kok. At the same time, however, a North Vietnamese battalion overran a lightly defended government outpost some 15 miles southeast of Keng Kok. On Sunday, enemy forces also attacked the town of Thakhek in the Mekong Valley. In the north, General Vang Pao's forces made no significant headway over the weekend near the Plaine des Jarres. Late yesterday, the Communists hit Luang Prabang airfield with 40 122-mm. rockets, which destroyed one aircraft and damaged ten others. The airfield itself suffered only light damage, and casualties were also light. The enemy failed to follow up the barrage with a ground attack.

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